

PRELIMINARY

REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS

FOR

LAYING OUT A PARK

IN

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK:

BEING A

CONSIDERATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF SITE AND OTHER CONDITIONS
AFFECTING THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC PLEASURE GROUNDS,

BY

OLMSTED, VAUX & CO.,

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS,

110 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

BROOKLYN:

I. VAN ANDEN'S PRINT, EAGLE BUILDINGS, 30 & 32 FULTON STREET.

1866.

PRELIMINARY

REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS

FOR

LAYING OUT A PARK

IN

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK:

BEING A

CONSIDERATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF SITE AND OTHER CONDITIONS
AFFECTING THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC PLEASURE GROUNDS,

BY

OLMSTED, VAUX & CO.,

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS,

110 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

BROOKLYN:

I. VAN ANDEN'S PRINT, EAGLE BUILDINGS, 30 & 32 FULTON STREET.

1866.

P75
05
1866

INDEX OF SUBJECTS.

OBJECTS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A TOWN PARK,.....	6
HOW THE OBJECTS OF A PARK ARE TO BE PURSUED,..	9
THE ARTISTIC ELEMENT IN THE DESIGN OF A PARK,	11
PLACES OF CONGREGATION AND REST IN THE BROOKLYN PARK,	17
SYLVAN FEATURES	do. do. 18
PLAY GROUNDS AND GREENSWARD	do. do. 19
ZOOLOGICAL GROUND	do. do. 19
GRAZING GROUND FOR DEER, ETC.,	do. do. 20
WATER WORKS AND DRAINAGE	do. do. 20
DRIVES, RIDES AND WALKS	do. do. 21
BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS,.....	25
ARRANGEMENT OF EXTERIOR STREETS, IN CONNECTION WITH THE BROOKLYN PARK,..	26
MUSEUMS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL EDIFICES, IN CONNECTION WITH PARKS,.....	28
SUBURBAN CONNECTIONS AND OTHER PROMENADES,.....	30

REPORT.

To the Board of Commissioners :

GENTLEMEN :

We have been instructed to lay before you at this time such plans, accompanied by information and advice, as would aid you in a final review of the boundaries of the park proposed to be formed under your government. The study herewith submitted has been prepared for this purpose, and though not designed to be full or accurate in all details, is intended to be complete in those respects which are essential to an understanding of the advantages to be gained by such changes of the boundaries as we would recommend to be secured, before a plan of construction is definitively settled upon.

We proceed to show what these changes are, and why they are considered desirable.

In selecting a site for a park, it is evidently important that such natural advantages should be secured as are found in well grown woods, an agreeable variety of surface and fair prospects both of distant and local scope. It is true, that a site may be deficient in any of these characteristics, and yet, with time enough and money enough, be convertible by well directed labor, into a park of varied and attractive scenery. If, however, such conditions as are most desirable to be added, should have been already provided by nature in the immediate vicinity of a site, it would be felt, on the one hand, to be an extravagance to repeat them by artificial means upon it; while, on the other, the disadvantage of its being without them would be greater, because more obvious. Moreover, there are two possible misfortunes of a site, which in no period of time, and by no expenditure of labor, can ever be remedied. These are, inadequate dimensions, and an inconvenient shape.

Our first duty has been to examine the site to which you have asked our attention, with reference to the several conditions we have thus indicated; that is to say, with reference to—

1. Convenience of its shape.
2. Amplitude of its dimensions.

3. Its topographical conditions, and the surrounding circumstances, in relation to which the value of its topographical conditions must in part be estimated.

The fact which first claims attention is the complete bisection of the site by a broad and conspicuous thoroughfare, (Flatbush avenue,) much used for ordinary and indispensable public travel, between Brooklyn and an important suburb that connects it with a large district of agricultural country. It is obvious that this division must seriously interfere with the impressions of amplitude and continuous extent, that the general dimensions of the ground assigned for a park would otherwise convey. To establish convenient communication between the two parts would involve a considerable outlay in bridge construction, which would not be called for if the public highway skirted the ground instead of traversing it. A thoroughfare crossing the park might be a useful and even necessary adjunct, if it were so situated that it served to connect two districts of the city that were likely in future to be closely built up, and that would otherwise be widely separated. Such, however, is not the case in the present instance, and a glance at the map of Brooklyn is sufficient to show that the line of travel, accommodated by the park section of Flatbush avenue, could be diverted, without much inconvenience, to Warren street and Washington avenue. If cross-roads for business purposes are required at all, it is in a direction nearly at right angles to Flatbush avenue. The city, however, is so laid out, that no real necessity is apparent for any merely traffic-roads across the property.

Proceeding to consider the two main divisions of the site separately, the Reservoir is found to encroach so seriously on the smaller section east of Flatbush avenue, that it is in effect subdivided again into two portions of very insignificant dimensions for park purposes. The formation of the ground is, moreover, of a character that would make its improvement very expensive, and when the best possible had been done, it would always present a cramped, contracted and unsatisfactory appearance. For these reasons, we think it our duty to advise, that so much of the site as lies east of Flatbush avenue should be abandoned for park purposes.

The great reduction which we have thus suggested in the dimensions of the park site, as originally provided, would oblige you either to be content with a much smaller park than has hitherto been contemplated, or to determine on an extension of its original boundaries in some other direction.

As the number and value of the health and pleasure giving circumstances possible in any park must of course be limited by its size, the question of size may be thought to depend on the restrictions fixed in regard to the number of these circumstances; and it may perhaps be thought that a large park has advantages over a small one only in the greater number and the greater variety, of the pleasures which it offers. But it would be a serious mistake to entertain any such idea, as will be evident to any one who will ask himself: Is there any pleasure which all persons find at all times in every park, and if so, what does that pleasure depend upon?

The answer unquestionably must be, that there is such a pleasure, common, constant and universal to all town parks, and that it results from the feeling of relief experienced by those entering them, on escaping from the cramped, confined and controlling circumstances of the streets of the town; in other words, *a sense of enlarged freedom* is to all, at all times, the most certain and the most valuable gratification afforded by a park. The scenery which favors this gratification is, therefore, more desirable to be secured than any other, and the various topographical conditions and circumstances of a site thus, in reality, become important very much in the proportion by which they give the means of increasing the general impression of undefined limit. The degree of this impression, which will be found in any particular park, must unquestionably depend very much upon the manner in which it is laid out; that is to say, on the manner in which the original topographical conditions are turned to account by the designers; but as no degree of art can make the back yard of a town house seem unlimited, and as no art at all is required to make a prairie of some hundred square miles seem unlimited to a man set down in the midst of it, it is obvious that a certain distance between the points of resort within the park, and its exterior limits, is necessary in order to allow the fence or wall that would otherwise definitely establish the position of the boundary to be obscured by planting, if nothing more; and that therefore, until all other necessary requirements are provided for, it will not be entirely prae-

licable to determine where the boundary lines of the park may be established, with a true economy of space.

We have first then to determine what accommodations are desirable to be secured within the park, and next how these shall be situated with reference to one another, and to exterior topographical circumstances. Our conclusions will depend first upon our understanding of the purposes which any town park should be designed to fulfill, that is to say, of the general principles to be observed, and secondly upon our estimate of the number and the special character of the people who are to use the particular park in question.

With regard to the latter point, we need only remark that we regard Brooklyn as an integral part of what to-day is the metropolis of the nation, and in the future will be the centre of exchanges for the world, and the park in Brooklyn, as part of a system of grounds, of which the Central Park is a single feature, designed for the recreation of the whole people of the metropolis and their customers and guests from all parts of the world for centuries to come. With regard, however, to the purposes which town parks in general should be intended and prepared to fulfil, this being a matter upon which little has ever been said or written, and upon which very different ideas prevail, and inasmuch as a clear understanding upon it must be had before a fair judgment can be formed of any plan for a town park, we propose to indicate the views which we have adopted, and out of which our plan has grown.

PURPOSES OF A PARK.

The word park has different significations, but that in which we are now interested has grown out of its application centuries ago, simply to hunting grounds; the choicest lands for hunting grounds being those in which the beasts of the chase were most happy, and consequently most abundant, sites were chosen for them, in which it was easy for animals to turn from rich herbage to clear water, from warm sunlight to cool shade; that is to say, by preference, ranges of well-watered dale-land, broken by open groves and dotted with spreading trees; undulating in surface, but not rugged. Gay parties of pleasure occasionally met in these parks, and when these meetings occurred the enjoyment otherwise obtained in them was found to be

increased. Hence, instead of mere hunting lodges and hovels for game keepers, extensive buildings and other accommodations, having frequently a festive character, were after a time provided within their enclosures. Then it was found that people took pleasure in them without regard to the attractions of the chase, or of conversation, and this pleasure was perceived to be, in some degree, related to their scenery, and in some degree to the peculiar manner of association which occurred in them; and this was also found to be independent of intellectual gifts, tranquilizing and restorative to the powers most tasked in ordinary social duties, and stimulating only in a healthy and recreative way to the imagination. Hence, after a time, parks began to be regarded and to be maintained with reference, more than any thing else, to the convenient accommodation of numbers of people, desirous of moving for recreation among scenes that should be gratifying to their taste or imagination.

In the present century, not only have the old parks been thus maintained, but many new parks have been formed with these purposes exclusively in view, especially within and adjoining considerable towns, and it is upon our knowledge of these latter that our simplest conception of a town park is founded. It is from experience in these that all our ideas of parks must spring.

This experience shows that the great advantage which a town finds in a park, lies in the addition to the health, strength and morality which comes from it to its people, an advantage which is not only in itself very great and positive but which as certainly results in an increase of material wealth as good harvests or active commerce. And the reason is obvious: all wealth is the result of labor, and every man's individual wealth is, on the whole, increased by the labor of every other in the community, supposing it to be wisely and honestly applied; but as there cannot be the slightest use of the will, of choice between two actions or two words, nor the slightest exercise of skill of any kind, without the expenditure of force, it follows that, without recuperation and recreation of force, the power of each individual to labor wisely and honestly is soon lost, and that, without the recuperation of force, the power of each individual to add to the wealth of the community is, as a necessary consequence, also soon lost.

But to this process of recuperation a condition is necessary, known since the days of Æsop, as the unbending of the faculties which have been tasked, and this *unbending* of the faculties we find

is impossible, except by the occupation of the imagination with objects and reflections of a quite different character from those which are associated with their bent condition. To secure such a diversion of the imagination, the best possible stimulus is found to be the presentation of a class of objects to the perceptive organs, which shall be as agreeable as possible to the taste, and at the same time entirely different from the objects connected with those occupations by which the faculties have been tasked. And this is what is found by townspeople in a park.

If now we ask further, what the qualities of a park are which fit it to meet this requirement? we find two circumstances, common to all parks in distinction from other places in towns, namely, scenery offering the most agreeable contrast to that of the rest of the town; and opportunity for people to come together for the single purpose of enjoyment, unembarrassed by the limitations with which they are surrounded at home, or in the pursuit of their daily avocations, or of such amusements as are elsewhere offered.

It may be observed, that these two purposes are not quite compatible one with the other; for that scenery which would afford the most marked contrast with the streets of a town, would be of a kind characterized in nature by the absence, or, at least, the marked subordination of human influences. Yet, in a park, the largest provision is required for the human presence. Men must come together, and must be seen coming together, in carriages, on horseback and on foot, and the concourse of animated life which will thus be formed, must in itself be made, if possible, an attractive and diverting spectacle.

How can these opposing requirements be harmonized?

Perfectly harmonized they cannot be, and, because they cannot be, success in realizing either must be limited. Yet, by a careful adjustment of parts, and by accommodating the means necessary to the effecting of one purpose to those necessary to the effecting of the other, both may be accomplished in a degree which experience shows is satisfactory.

In the endeavor to accommodate the requirements of the one purpose to those of the other, a perfect compromise at all points is not essential. On the contrary, it is desirable that each should be carried out at certain points in high degree and if the natural topography of the site chosen is varied, it will not be difficult to select points suitable for doing this.

It is, however, necessary, to a satisfactory result that what is wholly incompatible with one purpose and at the same time not absolutely necessary to the other should be everywhere rigidly avoided and excluded. For instance, a railroad station, a manufactory with chimnies and steam engines, advertising displays, wagons for commercial traffic, fast driving, gambling booths, a market place, though all of these may be seen in some town parks, are clearly there by mistake and want of proper consideration.* We may add that whatever the numbers to be accommodated, it is incompatible with the rural character required in a park, that anything like the embarrassing turmoil, confusion and discordant din, common to the crowded streets of the town should be necessarily encountered within it, while it is equally evident that no regard for scenery should be allowed to prevent the assemblage and movement of great crowds within the park—of crowds much greater than will occur anywhere else in the town.

To admit of this, and at the same time maintain anything of a rural, natural, tranquilizing and poetic character in the scenery, the driving room, riding room, walking room, sitting room, skating, sailing and playing room, must be not only liberally designed, but must be studied and adapted to all the natural circumstances of the site with the greatest care.

HOW THE OBJECTS OF A PARK ARE TO BE PURSUED.

To illustrate the practical application of these views, we will take one of the many classes of arrangements for the accommodation of the movements of the public through a park: The drive, or carriage way, and consider what is required in it.

A drive must be so prepared that those using it shall be called upon for the least possible exercise of judgment as to the course to

* There will always be a temptation to make use of the ground of a park for other public purposes than those to which it is primarily devoted, and, if this is not guarded against at the outset, there is great danger that after a time the purposes for which a park is especially designed will be subordinated, and all that has been done to meet them sacrificed to purposes which, with proper forethought and economy, would be equally well met on other sites. A park is a center about which public buildings are most appropriately placed, but if there is to be an obvious relation between the buildings and the scenery of the park, both should be parts of the same design. If no such relation is required, the buildings should not be seen from within the park. This subject is further discussed under the head of "Museums and other Edifices."

be pursued, the least possible anxiety or exercise of skill in regard to collisions or interruptions with reference to objects animate or inanimate, and that they shall, as far as possible, be free from the disturbance of noise and jar.

To secure these negative qualities, the course of the road must be simple; abrupt turns must be avoided, steep grades that would task the horses or suggest that idea must not be encountered. The possibility of the road becoming miry must be securely guarded against; its surface must also be smooth and be composed of compact material.

These being the first and essential engineering considerations, it is necessary, secondly, that they should be secured in a manner which shall be compatible with the presentation of that which is agreeable to the eye in the surrounding circumstances; that is to say, the drive must either run through beautiful scenery already existing or to be formed, and for this purpose it may be desirable at any point to deviate from the line which an engineer would be bound to choose as that which would best meet the first class of requirements. It must also be remembered that although the drive can hardly be expected in itself to add to the beauty of the scenery, it must always be more or less in view as part of it, and it should therefore be artistically designed so as to interfere as little as possible with the views, and to present at all points agreeable and harmonious lines to the eye. Moreover, as it is desirable that at some point in the course of a drive through every park, there should be an opportunity for those in carriages to see others and be seen by others, some portion of the ground, which by development of natural suggestions cannot be readily made very attractive to the eye, should be chosen for that purpose. And here it will be proper that the application of art to inanimate nature, as in architectural objects, and by festive decorations of the outlines of the drive itself, should distinctly invite attention, and aid to produce a general suggestion of sympathy with human gaiety and playfulness.

It is unnecessary to show here how the same general principles need to be regarded in planning the rides, the walks, the seats, the playing grounds, the skating fields, the places of refreshment, and in whatever other accommodations are proposed to be occupied by those who use the park. We would only remind you that no park has yet been made for the people of a large civilized town which has not been much more used than its designers had anticipated;

and that all danger of damage, misuse and wasteful destruction of public property practically amounts to nothing, except as it results from insufficient extent of the means of communication and of rest within the park, or from an appearance of slovenliness, or want of completeness and finish in its arrangements for gratifying the eye, which adjoin these accommodations.

THE ARTISTIC ELEMENT IN THE DESIGN OF A PARK.

The general principles in regard to scenery, which have governed us in our study, remain to be indicated ; and inasmuch as some misapprehension in our judgment generally prevails concerning the province of art in the formation of scenery, and especially of scenery in the natural style, we propose to briefly express our views upon that subject.

A mere imitation of nature, however successful, is not art, and the purpose to imitate nature, or to produce an effect which shall seem to be natural and interesting, is not sufficient for the duty before us.

A scene in nature is made up of various parts ; each part has its individual character and its possible ideal. It is unlikely that accident should bring together the best possible ideals of each separate part, merely considering them as isolated facts, and it is still more unlikely that accident should group a number of these possible ideals in such a way that not only one or two but that all should be harmoniously related one to the other. It is evident, however, that an attempt to accomplish this artificially is not impossible, and that a proper study of the circumstances relating to the perfect development of each particular detail will at least enable the designer to reckon surely on a certain success of a high character in that detail, and a comprehensive bringing together of the results of his study in regard to the harmonious relations of one, two or more details may enable him to discover the law of harmonious relation between multitudinous details ; and if he can discover it, there is nothing to prevent him from putting it into practice. The result would be a work of art, and the combination of the art thus defined, with the art of architecture in the production of landscape compositions, is what we denominate landscape architecture.

The first process in the application of this art upon any given site,

is the formation of a judgment upon the capabilities and the limitations of that site, with reference to the artistic purpose. It is obviously impossible, for instance, to produce in the vicinity of Brooklyn such scenery as will affect the mind as it is affected by the Alps or the Sierras, on the one hand, or by the luxuriant vegetation of a tropical swamp on the other.

Moreover, there are certain kinds of scenery which experience shows to be most satisfactory within a town park, which require an extensive aggregation of their elements. It will be readily seen, for instance, that if all the wood, water and turf, within a certain area of ground, were distributed in patches, strips and pools, however extensive as a whole, and however varied in detail it might seem to those who should thoroughly explore all its parts, there would be no part which would not seem confined, there could be no large open single scene, and no such impression or effect on the mind would be produced as there would be, if all the water were collected in one lake, all the trees in one grove, all the strips of grass in one broad meadow. Such aggregations, and consequently the degree of the impression intended to be produced by them, must be limited by consideration for two other purposes: the purpose of variety of interest, and the purpose to make all the scenery available to the satisfaction of the public by ways of communication. Other limitations upon the artistic purpose, again, are imposed by conditions of soil and exposure, by rocks and springs. How far each of these can be overcome, as by blasting, draining, grading, screening, manuring and other processes, must be in every case a special study, and the artistic purposes of the plan must be affected in every part and particular by the conclusions arrived at.

In the case before us, it is obvious that we should attempt nothing which is incompatible with, or inappropriate to, comparatively slight variations of surface, and a climate of considerable rigor. On the other hand, there are no protruding ledges of rock, no swamps difficult of drainage, and there is no especial bleakness, or danger to trees from violent winds, to be apprehended. It is under similar conditions to these that we find in nature that class of scenery, already referred to, as the original and typical scenery of parks or hunting grounds, and which is termed pastoral. It consists of combinations of trees, standing singly or in groups, and casting their shadows over broad stretches of turf, or repeating their beauty by reflection upon the calm surface of pools, and the predominant associations are in

the highest degree tranquilizing and grateful, as expressed by the Hebrew poet: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters." We know of no other landscape effects that can be commanded, within the limitations fixed by the conditions of this site, which experience shows to be more desirable in a town park than these. This being the case, no other should be sought for or retained, if, by discarding them, we can the better secure these. Only so far then as we can, without sacrificing any thing that will contribute to the highest practicable ideal of pastoral scenery, should we endeavor to secure any degree of those other ideals, of which the best types are found under widely dissimilar circumstances.

Although we cannot have wild mountain gorges, for instance, on the park, we may have rugged ravines shaded with trees, and made picturesque with shrubs, the forms and arrangement of which remind us of mountain scenery. We may perhaps even secure some slight approach to the mystery, variety and luxuriance of tropical scenery, by an assemblage of certain forms of vegetation, gay with flowers, and intricate and mazy with vines and creepers, ferns, rushes and broad-leaved plants. But all we can do in these directions must be confessedly imperfect, and suggestive rather than satisfying to the imagination. It must, therefore, be made incidental and strictly subordinate to our first purpose.

Having formed these general plans, we find, in further studying the site, its most important circumstance to be the fact, that a large body of trees already exist upon it, not too old to be improved, yet already old enough to be of considerable importance in a landscape. These trees are in two principal divisions, between which a space of two or three hundred feet in width is found, of undulating ground, not wholly ungraceful, and now mainly covered with a ragged turf. A few trees stand out singly upon this space. It is more nearly level, and less occupied by trees, than any other portion of the site. There is no rock in place upon it, nor would it be at all impracticable to reduce its few abrupt and graceless hillocks, and fill up its gravel pits and muck holes. If we imagine this to be done, and then look at it in connection with the surrounding groves, it is obvious that all that is required to form here a fair example of pastoral scenery is, first, an improvement of the turf, and, secondly, greater space, so that the observer may not see all the boundaries of free sunlight before him at a glance. The former

requirement is certainly within our power, all that is needed to secure it being the drainage, deep tillage and enrichment of the soil, and the substitution of finer grasses for the present coarse grasses and weeds. Something may be done also with regard to the second, by cutting in upon the borders of the woods, where the ground lies in gentle slopes, leaving only the finer trees to stand out singly, or in small groups, upon the turf to be formed upon the new ground thus obtained. Were this done, however, the open space would still be comparatively an unimportant one in relation to the whole park. The observer would take it all in at a glance, and if this were all he felt that he could look for, the result would be tantalizing rather than satisfactory.

As a very important suggestion springs from this observation, we shall be pardoned for referring to a portion of the Central Park, New York, where somewhat similar conditions formerly existed, and where our views have been adopted and realized. Entering by the turn to the right, at the Merchant's Gate, in a few moments the visitor's eye falls upon the open space called the Cricket Ground, where originally was a small swamp, enlarged at great expense in the construction of the park, in order to meet a similar artistic purpose to that above explained, by the removal of several large ledges of rock, and now occupied by an unbroken meadow, which extends before the observer to a distance of nearly a thousand feet. Here is a suggestion of freedom and repose, which must in itself be refreshing and tranquilizing to the visitor coming from the confinement and bustle of crowded streets. But this is not all. The observer, resting for a moment to enjoy the scene, which he is induced to do by the arrangement of the planting, cannot but hope for still greater space than is obvious before him, and this hope is encouraged, first, by the fact that, though bodies of rock and foliage to the right and left obstruct his direct vision, no limit is seen to the extension of the meadow in a lateral direction; while beyond the low shrubs, which form an undefined border to it in front, there are no trees or other impediments to vision for a distance of half a mile or more, and the only distinct object is the wooded knoll of Vista Rock, nearly a mile away, upon the summit of which it is an important point in the design, not yet realized, to erect a slight artificial structure, for the purpose of catching the eye, and the better holding it in this direction. The imagination of the visitor is thus led instinctively to form the idea that a broad expanse is

opening before him, and the more surely to accomplish this, a glimpse of a slope of turf beyond the border of shrubs in the middle distance has been secured. As the visitor proceeds, this idea is strengthened, and the hope which springs from it in a considerable degree satisfied, if not actually realized, first by a view of those parts of the Cricket Ground which lie to the right and left of his previous field of vision, afterwards by the broad expanse of turf on either side and before him, which comes into view as he emerges from the plantations at or near the marble archway.

The carrying out of this most important purpose in the scenery of the Central Park, owing to the rocky and heterogeneous character of the original surface, involved much more labor and a larger expenditure than any other landscape feature of that undertaking.

For the same reason that induced us to recommend that expenditure to the Commissioners of the Central Park, we feel dissatisfied with the limits of the space we are now regarding. It is evident at a glance, however, that if we do not restrict ourselves to the artificial boundary formerly fixed upon for the park, this space may readily be more than doubled in extent without encroaching upon any considerable natural elevation, and at a very moderate expense. Thus our second requirement would be met.

In addition to the special artistic advantage which the acquisition of this ground would secure, there are two other very important considerations in favor of obtaining it: First, such an addition is almost indispensable to a proper provision of playing grounds, there being no space of moderately level ground, not occupied by groves of trees of much value, sufficient for this purpose, upon the territory now controlled by your Commission; second, its acquisition will enable us to make a very great improvement upon any general plan of drives, rides and walks, which would otherwise be practicable, and in these and other ways, to which we shall hereafter allude, it will greatly lessen the danger of overcrowding the park.

Next to groves and greensward, a sheet of water is the most important element in the character of the scenery which we desire to realize. We find no place suited to the formation of such a feature of sufficient extent within the limits of the site now held by your Commission. At a short distance beyond them, there is, however, a broad plain, overlooked on the park side by the highest ground in the vicinity, from the top of which there is a prospect to

the southward, which includes a large sweep of the ocean, the Highlands of Navesink, Sandy Hook, and all the outer harbor of New York. The formation of a lake on the low ground referred to, in such a manner that this elevation would be reflected upon its surface, would add such an unquestionable advantage to the landscape attractions of the park, that we should feel obliged to take the same course with reference to it as we have done in regard to the previously proposed extension of the limits of the site, even if no other considerations favored it. The great value of a park lake in this climate, however, for skating, and the attractiveness of the spectacle which crowds of skaters afford to others, added to its value for the recreation of rowing, afford additional inducements of no small consequence in favor of this course. With the further addition, which we therefore advise, it will be practicable to form a sheet of water having more than twice the accommodation for skaters of that in the Central Park. The Central Park lake, though many objected to it originally as larger than necessary for any artistic purpose, while it occupied space which might be otherwise used to advantage, is already found much too small for the comfortable accommodation of those who are prepared to use it, and many turn from it, in consequence, to those small ponds where the payment of an admission fee secures greater space to individual skaters. If this is now the case, the need of very much larger skating space will be a very pressing one in the future, as population increases. We cannot doubt that a sheet of ice in Brooklyn, equally near to the present centre of population of the metropolis, and more than twice as large as that in the Central Park, would soon attract a larger number of persons than have ever yet resorted to the latter. This number has on several occasions been above one hundred thousand in a day and five hundred thousand in a week. If we consider that the opportunity afforded for this recreation would be worth in the acquisition of health and vigor to the whole body of citizens an amount equal to a dime for each visitor, it will be evident that the whole cost of purchasing the land in view, and of constructing the lake, might be defrayed by the use which would be made of it in a single season.

Supposing the more hilly land to be covered by plantations, and a green-sward to be formed upon the open ground which we have described, and the low plain to be mainly occupied by a lake, we have the three grand elements of pastoral landscape for which we were seeking. What remains consists of limited strips of surface,

generally stony and somewhat rough, and may be left to be treated incidentally, as before explained. To the important features of the greensward, the wood, the lake and the hill, the roads and walks must be accommodated in such a way as to give the visitor the best advantage, consistent with ease and comfort, for enjoying whatever charm they may be made to possess. Before referring particularly to the system of communications, however, it will be best to speak of certain other detached arrangements.

PLACES OF CONGREGATION AND REST.

Besides the green, our study provides three places, each adapted to the assemblage of large numbers of people, and for their remaining together for some time at rest.

The first of these we designate the Look-out. The circumstances which make a special arrangement for the accommodation of an assemblage at this point desirable are, 1st, the view which is obtained here, and nowhere else in the park, of the outer harbor, the distant mountain ranges of New Jersey and the ocean offing; 2d, the peculiar advantages which the elevation offers for the enjoyment in hot weather of the sea breeze; 3d, the interest of the local scenery, which it is our intention should be quite different from that of any other part of the park; and 4th, The bird's eye view which will be presented of military evolutions, if the projected parade-ground should be formed south of the park.

We propose to form here a terraced platform, one hundred feet in length, with seats and awnings, connected by a broad terrace walk and staircase with an oval court for carriages, three hundred feet long and one hundred and fifty wide. On the west side of the platform, provision is made for a small low building, designed for the special accommodation of women and children, and at which they may obtain some simple refreshment. This building is also intended to serve the purpose of shutting off the view westwardly from the lookout platform, as this would otherwise detract from the effect obtained in other directions.

All the principal walks of the park tend to lead the visitor from whatever entrance he starts, to finally reach the lookout, though he may visit every other part of the park, and yet avoid this if he prefers. From the lookout, broad walks lead across the park to the

east end of the lake, where, at a point commanding the largest water view, together with a rich open meadow landscape, backed by the highest elevation of the park, pinnaled with evergreens, arrangements for open-air concerts are proposed. The orchestra will be situated upon an island in a bay of the lake, so that it can be seen from three sides. On the main land, within a distance of two hundred and twenty-five yards of this island—at which distance the music of a well appointed band can be perfectly appreciated—standing room is provided for horses and carriages in a circular space about five hundred feet in diameter and, in an oval space at a higher elevation, three hundred feet long and one hundred and seventy-five feet wide, while directly in front, at a distance varying from one hundred to five hundred feet, a space is provided, to be occupied by shaded seats, sufficient for over ten thousand people. Provision is made for the rapid dispersion of the audience, however large it may be, on foot, in carriages, and on horseback; also for checking the movement of carriages within the circular space, during the performance of music.

Midway between the lookout concourse and the music concourse, and with approaches for footmen and carriages from both, a series of terraces and arcades is provided, within which there will be room for a large restaurant. These look out upon the lake, and the floor of the lower arcade will be nearly on a level with the surface of the lake, so that it can be readily entered from the ice in winter or from boats in summer. The upper terrace is five hundred feet in length by sixty feet in width, and the remaining floor space of the structure one hundred and seventy-five by two hundred feet. The arcades are intended to be the principal architectural feature of the park.

SYLVAN FEATURES.

There are four sylvan features of considerable importance in the plan. First, upon the green, the meadow, and the slopes of the upper lake, a display of the finest American forest trees, standing singly and in open groups, so as to admit of the amplest development of individuals, which will be further encouraged by the best attainable conditions of soil and situation.

Second, in the central portions of the park, an open grove of forest trees, in which visitors may ramble in the shade without im-

pediment of underwood, and without danger of doing harm to anything through carelessness or any ordinary selfish impulse.

Third, a collection, arranged in the natural way, of the more delicate shrubs and trees, especially evergreens, both coniferous and of the class denominated in England American plants, such as *Rhododendrons*, *Kalmias*, *Azalias* and *Andromedas*: these would be situated on the interior slopes of the Lookout and the Friend's Hill, and in the valley between them, where, from the peculiar circumstances of exposure and protection they will be likely to thrive.

Fourth, picturesque groups of evergreens and deciduous trees and shrubs on the shore of the lake.

PLAY GROUNDS AND GREENSWARD.

A portion of the green, nearest the Flatbush railroad and the refectory, and where the surrounding road and walks are at the greatest distance from the centre, is proposed to be fitted to be used for a ball playing ground, by the children of the public schools and others.

We should advise that the whole of the green, upon special occasions at least, if not at all times, should be open to all persons on foot, as a common. If the ground is properly prepared, there is no danger that the beauty of the turf would be seriously impaired, except perhaps immediately after heavy rains, at which time it would seldom occur that the park would be greatly crowded with visitors. If this is done, and the interior groves also thrown open to pedestrians, through their whole extent between the bridle road and the green, we consider that the danger that the walks and resting places would be overcrowded so as to force or sorely tempt visitors to go upon ground where they would really injure the elements of the scenery, or create disturbance, embarrassment and waste, would be very small.

ZOOLOGICAL GROUND.

The tract of broken ground, near the Ninth avenue, now partly occupied by gardens and residences, the features of which are quite varied, but rather diminutive for desirable park effects, we propose should be held in reserve for zoological collections, and, as it may

properly be placed under the control of a special corporation for this purpose, we refrain at this time from suggesting in what manner it should be laid out. This subject will be recurred to.

GRAZING GROUND FOR DEER.

The narrow sheltered strip of meadow, on the opposite side of the park, we propose to enclose with a sufficient iron paling and make use of as a pasture ground for deer, antelopes, gazelles, and such other grazing animals as can be satisfactorily herded together in summer upon it.

WATER WORKS AND DRAINAGE.

In regard to the water needed for the lake, we are informed that sufficient may be spared from the general supply already brought to the city by the Nassau Water Works. We recommend, however, that arrangements be had in view, not only for securing an independent supply, but also for keeping up a constant circulation, by pumping the water from the lake to the spring on the west side of the Friend's Hill, so that it may always be flowing from that point in a natural stream. The pump for this purpose would be worked by steam, in connection with the kitchen of the refectory. The stream furnished by the spring is intended to take first the character of a series of pools, overhung on the one side by the trees upon the north side of the Friend's Hill, and margined on the other by banks of turf. It would then assume more of the usual character of a small mountain stream, taking a very irregular course, with numerous small rapids, shoots and eddies, among rocks and ferns, until it emerged from the shadow of the wood upon a grassy slope; thence it would flow more quietly until, after falling over a body of rock, in connection with a foot bridge on the side of the park opposite that on which it started, it would assume the appearance of a small river with high and shaded banks and at length, passing the refectory and music concourse in two reaches, empty into the eastern bay of the lake. Here, on the north shore would be a low flat meadow with a few large trees and small thickets of bushes overhanging the water. In the coves would be beds of pond

lillies and other aquatic plants, and, on the shores near them, flags, cat-tails, bulrushes and the like. This arrangement would give opportunity for every variety of water scenery which is practicable within the space of the park, with any moderate supply of water.

The natural outlet for the surplus water of the park would be in a southerly direction, and a plan of drainage may be adopted that will be more simple and less expensive than would usually be practicable upon a site of this extent, having such a considerable variety of surface.

DRIVES, RIDES AND WALKS.

The more important features of scenery and of local accommodations for various purposes, having been thus pointed out, we now turn to the several ways of communication by which they are connected and related one to another.

The drive, commencing with a width of sixty (60) feet, at the centre of the north or principal entrance to the park, is carried in a southerly direction for some little distance, but diverges slightly to the east, so as to accommodate itself to some high ground in the neighborhood. It there branches to the southeast and southwest, and becomes a part of the circuit drive, which is proposed to be of an average width of forty (40) feet. The arrangement of the lines and curves, at the junction, is such that carriages coming into the park will continue to proceed for a few hundred feet in a southeasterly direction, after reaching the circuit drive, and will thus be fairly started on the road that it is intended they should follow, for, although the formation of the ground naturally suggests this treatment of the lines, we should, under any circumstances, have made an effort to arrange the plan in some such way as is indicated in the design, because the southeasterly branch leads more directly into the heart of the park. It commands, moreover, from a point very near the entrance, a view in the direction of the length of what is now an unplanted stretch of ground, but which is treated in the design as open lawn or meadow, dotted with trees, it being the intention to reduce the height of a low, narrow ridge that crosses this piece of ground, so that its real extent may be fairly seen from the drive.

Continuing on the course already indicated, the road soon curves to the right, and ascends to a point from which it is proposed to obtain

an extensive view, in a westerly direction, over the great green of the park. From this point, the road descends into the wooded defile where an old wayside inn now stands, marking the ground held by the Continental forces in an engagement during the battle of Long Island, at which point it will be practicable in perfecting the plan of the park to provide for some architectural memento of that important struggle.

Passing through the defile, a view is obtained over a pretty glade of turf to the left, intended to be used as a grazing ground for deer, and bounded on the opposite side by the thick coppice-wood which already effectually conceals the Flatbush avenue. Keeping to the right of the deer paddock, the drive continues to pass through the woods, but presently divides into two somewhat narrower branches, by which means full advantage is taken of the already existing opportunities for shade, and the standing trees are less interfered with than would otherwise be necessary, and then, reuniting, continues to run in a southerly direction, till it approaches the proposed Franklin avenue boundary line. At this point it divides again, and one branch enlarges almost directly into the open space previously described as the music concourse. The other branch or main line of drive, after passing the two entrances to the concourse, is carried round the head of the lake, and along the shore in a westerly direction, till it approaches the proposed Coney Island road boundary. It then curves to the northward, still following the shore of the lake, until it reaches the west side of the lookout hill. Although there is nothing interesting in the natural scenery of this stretch, the bank of the lake will be made so artificially, and there will be very agreeable views across the water, the north shore being the most picturesque part of the park. This is intended to be used more particularly as the promenade or common course of the park. The drive is consequently laid out of unusual width, and the bridle road, together with a broad walk, is carried in close connection with it.

The western foot of the look-out hill is one of the most important points on the whole line of drive. It is very desirable that the road should retain its circuit character, and continue on in a northerly direction when the hill is reached, as the whole lake has by this time been seen, the social or gregarious disposition is supposed to have been satisfied, and a considerable change is therefore needed in the landscape effect. The way in which we propose that this

shall be managed will be readily understood by an examination of the plan; and, although the contour lines of the strip of ground proposed to be added in this immediate neighborhood will need to be somewhat modified, the object in view is really so essential to the development of the whole design, that its successful accomplishment will justify any reasonable expenditure that it may be necessary to incur for the sake of securing it. The main drive continues, therefore, in a westerly direction, leaving the Friends' Hill to the northward, and afterwards opening directly upon and keeping in view the most purely rural, and at the same time the most expanded and extended, view within the park. On approaching the Ninth avenue boundary, it curves to the east round the green, enters the western woods, divides again into two branches, and, after reuniting, passes on for some distance, still in the midst of groves, until, after passing along the side of the meadow stretch that was viewed in the direction of its length, at the commencement of the drive, it reaches the starting point near the main entrance.

In addition to the circuit drive thus described, a cross-road is introduced about the middle of the park, from which will be obtained a fine open out-look towards the country beyond the southern boundary. A loop from this interior road leads to the refectory and across a bridge, over an arm of the lake, to a carriage concourse of smaller size than the one already described, which it is proposed to construct on somewhat elevated ground, overlooking the lake and the music stand. A branch from this cross-road is proposed to lead up the slopes on the side of the look-out hill, to the open area on the upper level, which will command a view of the ocean. The connections with the various entrances are proposed to be made as shown on the plan, and the whole length of drive thus provided for is about five miles and a half.

The bridle road is so laid out on the plan, that by increasing the size of some archways needed for other purposes, it may, if desired, be kept distinct from the carriage road and the footpaths through the whole length of its circuit. It follows generally the line of the main road, sometimes in immediate connection with it, and sometimes passing along at a considerable distance from it. The whole length of the bridle road laid out on the plan is about four miles.

The drive and the bridle road being thus arranged for, the system of walks proposed by the plan next requires attention. It is very important to the comfort of pedestrians, that they should be

able to proceed into the park from the entrances that will be chiefly used, without having to cross over the circuit drive or bridle road, and that, when once fairly in among the trees and grass stretches, they should be able to ramble over the whole extent of the property with as much apparent freedom as if the whole park had been intended solely for their enjoyment.

There are two points in the design which may be said to be central points, so far as the walk system is concerned: the summit level of the look-out hill overlooking the ocean, and the large open air hall of reception shown on the plan, near the principal carriage concourse already described. All the leading lines will be found to tend in these directions, and the intermediate walks are designed to give variety and intricacy, without interfering with this general intention of the design. From the main entrance two walks are proposed to start. One passes near the north-eastern boundary, and leads to the reservoir bridge over Flatbush avenue; it then continues in a southerly direction, skirting the deer paddock, and terminates at the music concourse. A branch of this walk passes under the carriage road, near the main entrance, and opens directly on to the meadow stretch which forms the northern division of the great green. The walk passes around this meadow, and crossing the green commands a full view of its whole extent; then through the woods into a ravine by the side of the brook and by an arched passage under the carriage road to the lawn-like open ground north of the lookout hill; then again through the woods till it meets the line, already described, which leads to the music concourse.

The second walk that starts from the main entrance passes in a rather more westerly direction. It has the same general tendency as the walks above mentioned, and leads both to the look-out and to the music concourse.

A walk extends all around the lake and around the green, and a system of walks is introduced to connect the music concourse and the look-out with the refectory; but it is not necessary to describe all these walks in detail.

From the principal entrance at the junction of Flatbush and Ninth avenues, from the entrance at the corner of Fifteenth street and Ninth avenue, from the foot entrance at the junction of Sixteenth street and the Coney Island road, and from the entrance from Flatbush avenue, near the Willink property, it is proposed to have walks, leading to the principal points of interest, that will not be

interfered with by the carriage road. From the other two entrances, surface cross-walks are proposed, as it would be difficult, on account of the embankment that will be necessary to retain the waters of the lake, to adopt the plan used elsewhere.

BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS.

Outside the exterior drives and walks, such extent of ground only is wanted as is necessary to enable us, by planting and otherwise, to shut out of view that which would be inharmonious with and counteractive to our design. This extent we find in all cases, without carrying the boundary beyond the nearest street line, as laid down on the city map, and except at the two points where the ground, which might otherwise seem to be more than is required to enable us to plant out the boundary, is occupied by the zoological grounds and the deer paddock before described, it will be found that the amount of ground taken into the park, beyond what is absolutely necessary for this purpose, is nowhere equal to the depth of an ordinary lot. Practically there will not be a foot of ground within the boundary the use of which will not add to the interest of the park and its value to the citizens. At one point, the boundary is kept a long distance within the nearest street line. This is where the orchards and villa gardens, on the east of the drive, near the music-concourse, admit of a narrower margin than would otherwise answer. The fronts of these valuable grounds near the park are not likely to be built upon before its border trees will have become well grown, nor until a street has been opened along the boundary line. Any buildings then likely to be erected here will consequently be placed at such a distance as not to be conspicuous from the park, while the arrangement enables the city to avoid the purchase of any land having special value from its association with highly improved residences.

By adopting the line of Franklin Avenue for the boundary on the south, about half the space between an observer standing on Look-out Hill and the horizon, will seem to be occupied by the lake and the park. This effect will of course be merely an optical one, but a visit to the site will show at once that it will be all-sufficient to divert the attention of the visitor from the land occupied for agricultural purposes, and will serve to render the sea view more attractive. This advantage will be considerably increased, if the

ground immediately beyond Franklin avenue should be appropriated for a parade ground, or any other public purpose which will prevent it from being occupied by tall buildings. A nearer boundary than Franklin avenue would probably fail to realize the effect desired in this particular.

It is proposed to widen Vanderbilt avenue to one hundred feet, as far as the limits of the property at present owned by the Commissioners; also to widen Ninth avenue to one hundred feet, as far as the limits of the park are proposed to extend; also to widen Fifteenth street, the Coney Island road and Franklin avenue, as shown on the plan, wherever they connect with the proposed boundary lines. In all these cases, the additional width is proposed to be added on the side of the road next to the park, leaving the lines on the opposite of the road as already laid down on the city map.

On the additional ground thus obtained, it is proposed to construct a thirty-feet sidewalk, shaded by a double row of trees, so that an ample gas-lighted and umbrageous promenade will be offered to the public in the immediate vicinity of the park, after the gates are closed at night. The comparatively close planting of these avenue trees will moreover help to shut out the houses that will be built on the opposite side of the street from the view of the visitors who may be in the interior of the park.

ARRANGEMENT OF EXTERIOR STREETS.

In conclusion, we wish to offer a few suggestions with regard to the management of some parts of the ground outside of the park boundaries.

Although, for the reasons given at the beginning of this report, we think it desirable that the section of the site as originally established, lying east of Flatbush avenue, should be abandoned as a part of the park, it does not follow that the lines laid down on the city map, before the project of a park in this vicinity had been suggested, should be re-adopted, and considerable advantages may be obtained, in our judgment, by adjusting them with reference to the park.

We have indicated on our study the manner in which this may be done. It will be seen that while the streets north of the reservoir follow the old lines, those south of it are set out at right angles to Flatbush avenue, instead of diagonally as formerly; and as Grand and Classon avenues cannot cross the park, they are stopped at Washington avenue.

This district, if re-arranged in the manner suggested, will most probably be occupied to a considerable extent by residences of a first-class character, and as the blocks will be sixty feet more than the usual width, it will be easy in execution, if thought desirable, to subdivide the property in such a way that, while on one street the lots will be of ordinary length, on the other they will be so much longer that ample room will be provided for stables that will have a convenient lane access between the two.

An open place or square is suggested at the junction of Grand and Washington avenues, and Washington avenue is proposed to be widened ten feet along the whole length of the property now owned by the Commissioners. A design is also shown for a possible future improvement opposite the park gate, in the vicinity of the present Willink property, so that Franklin avenue may be included in our general scheme for the arrangement of the approaches to this important entrance. As there is a fine distant view from the top of the reservoir, and as this structure belongs inalienably to the city, we also propose to reserve some of the ground about it so as to be able to flank it with agreeable groups of trees, and to connect it by means of a light foot-bridge over Flatbush avenue with the walks of the park, as indicated on our study. The formation of the ground is suitable for the purpose and the fine view to be obtained from the upper level of the reservoir can thus be associated with the attractions of the park.

In addition to the principal entrance, provision is made for gates to the park on Flatbush avenue, near the Willink property; on Franklin avenue, near the southeast corner of the proposed boundaries; at the junction of Franklin avenue, with the Coney Island road; at the junction of Sixteenth street and the Coney Island road, and from the junction of Ninth avenue and Fifteenth street. Another entrance is indicated on the Ninth avenue, opposite Third street, which can either lead into the park or connect simply with the zoological garden, as may be ultimately determined.

Improvements are suggested, in connection with three of these entrances, which seem to be necessary, for the purpose of securing easy and agreeable approaches; and the advantage proposed to be gained in each case will be so readily understood, by reference to the plan, that we deem further explanations in regard to this part of the design unnecessary.

Although the ground now held by your Commission, east of Flatbush avenue, does not appear to us desirable to be retained for the purpose for which it has been assigned, it will nevertheless be an advantage to the park, if a small section of it, abutting on Flatbush avenue and facing the park, remains in the possession of the city. We therefore desire to offer a suggestion as to the use to which it may be appropriated.

It is undesirable that any duties or responsibilities should be assumed by legislative bodies that can be equally well undertaken by citizens, either individually or associated in their private capacity. The exact limit of judicious legislation in this way cannot however be defined, and while there are many public responsibilities that clearly cannot be assumed by individual citizens, and many more that can, there are some few that are of an intermediate character, and that require special consideration. It is generally conceded that a system of popular education is an essential part of a republican government, for instance, but it is by no means determined what means of education should be secured to all, and to what extent the public can be taxed, with reasonable assurance of a saving to the tax payers through a reduction of taxes for courts, police, prisons and poorhouses, and the general cheapening of the necessities of life by the increased capacity for productive labor of the whole community which may be obtained through the improvement of the educational system.

It is very desirable therefore that plans should, if possible, be adopted by our municipal bodies, which will admit of strict construction, and at the same time be no bar to the progressive improvement of our methods of education. At present, book learning and education are generally considered correlative terms, but the conviction is evidently fast gaining ground in the public mind, which has long been established with those who have given the most thorough consideration to the subject, that, although the ordinary chances of observation may be sufficient to make many branches of knowledge which are inculcated in books sufficiently intelligible, there are others, progress in which is of special value with reference to the enlargement of the mind and the development of healthy inclinations and habits, which cannot be pursued with much advantage in this second-hand way.

Hence, it may be anticipated that the common-school system of a large city will, sooner or later, be generally considered incomplete, unless ample opportunity is found within it for the direct exercise by every student of his perceptive faculties in regard to a large class of objects not likely to come under his ordinary observation. The idea of education, it must be confessed by all, unquestionably culminates in the development of the reflective faculties, but the reflective faculties—which are secondary—can never, it is obvious, be healthily exercised if the perceptive faculties—which are primary—are neglected and starved.

The question therefore is pertinent, even at present, whether the city, without absolutely assuming the whole expense and the whole control of undertakings for this end, may not wisely offer some encouragement to associations voluntarily formed by citizens for the purpose.

Having some such views in mind as these, when we were preparing the design of Central Park, we advocated the retention of the building near the boundary, north of the Artist's Gate, formerly used as an arsenal, simply because it would probably, if retained, be found to be of sufficient value to be converted into a suitable building for a museum, and although it was very inconveniently located for any such purpose, we felt that the opportunity was one that ought not to be lost. Our suggestion was adopted by the Commissioners, and the Historical Society has since asked for and obtained possession from them of this site and this building with the understanding that it is to be improved and converted into a public museum at the expense of the society.

We have before shown the impropriety, as a general rule, of placing edifices, which are not strictly auxilliary to the primary purpose of a park, within its boundaries, and this illustration is, of course, presented with no purpose of favoring their introduction but rather to show that they ought in some other way to be provided for in season. The suggestion we have to make in this case is that the stretch of ground abutting on Flatbush avenue, fronting towards the park (marked R. R. on the plan), and now in the possession of the Commissioners, should be distinctly set apart for such purposes as we have indicated. If this suggestion is accepted, the lots on this part of Flatbush avenue, will probably, in course of time, be occupied by handsome buildings, the objects of which will in some way be connected with the educational system of the city, but

which will not be erected or owned by it, the terms on which the different sites would be given being such as to secure a share of control in the management of each institution, sufficient to ensure to the city an adequate return for the value of the land it parts with.

SUBURBAN CONNECTIONS.

It will be observed that we have indicated the commencement of a road leading out of the west side of the circle, in connection with the southern entrance to the park. We have done so from a conviction, that a shaded pleasure drive in extension of that of the park, and free from the embarrassments which will inevitably be associated with a road partially occupied by a line of railway, and which is also used as a trotting course for fast horses, will soon be demanded by the frequenters of the park. Such a road, whatever may be the character of the country through which it passes, should be in itself of a picturesque character. It should, therefore, be neither very straight nor very level, and should be bordered by a small belt of trees and shrubbery.

We have made no special survey with reference to the course which should be followed by such a road, but the first objective point in view would unquestionably be the ocean beach, and this might very properly be its terminus. It has occurred to us, however, that either from some point a little further east on the beach, thus made accessible by carriages from the park, or from a point more directly in connection with the park drives, a similar road may be demanded in the future which shall be carried through the rich country lying back of Brooklyn, until it can be turned, without striking through any densely occupied ground, so as to approach the East River, and finally reach the shore at or near Ravenswood. From this point, either by ferry or high bridges, it may be thrown over the two narrow straits into which the East River is divided in this neighborhood, and connection may thus be had with one of the broad streets leading directly into the Central Park, and thus with the system of somewhat similar sylvan roads leading northward, now being planned by the Commissioners of the Central Park. Such an arrangement would enable a carriage to be driven on the half of a summer's day, through the most interesting parts both of the cities of Brooklyn and New York, through their most attractive

and characteristic suburbs, and through both their great parks; having a long stretch of the noble Hudson with the Palisades in the middle distance, and the Shawangunk range of mountains in the back-ground, in view at one end, and the broad Atlantic with its foaming breakers rolling on the beach, at the other.

The whole might be taken in a circuit without twice crossing the same ground, and would form a grand municipal promenade, hardly surpassed in the world either for extent or continuity of interest.

This suggestion forms no part of our plan and may seem premature, but there can be but little danger of too extended a prevision with reference to future improvements which may grow out of so important a work as that upon which your Commission is engaged, and we have, therefore, in the preparation of the design herewith submitted endeavored, as far as possible, to arrange for a proper connection with any undertakings of the character indicated which may hereafter be found to be required.

Respectfully,

OLMSTED, VAUX & CO.,

Landscape Architects.

JANUARY 24th, 1866.

PRELIMINARY STUDY OF A
 DESIGN FOR PROSPECT PARK
 PROPOSED TO BE LAID OUT FOR
 THE CITY OF BROOKLYN



